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2. — *The Statesmen of America in 1846*. By SARAH MYTTON MAURY. London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longman; Paternoster Row. 1847. 12mo. pp. 508.

WE do not wonder it took so many publishers to bring out this book. It is one of the most remarkable productions of the present age. Nor do we wonder at the ill-treatment it has received from a portion of the London press. The journalists of England have always been a prejudiced race, and jealous of American superiority in arts and arms; and the greater part of the English travellers have played into the hands of these narrow-minded gentlemen, by attributing to us the same faults that mark the other portions of the human race. Our orations on the Fourth of July and in the general Congress constantly deny the soft impeachment; but John Bull refuses to be convinced. Mrs. Maury has come out on our side with such unanswerable examples, that Mr. Bull grows angry, and tries to evade the conclusion by railing at "politics in petticoats." He is unwilling that such impartial and strong testimony in our favor should go forth uncontradicted to the world, and thinks to counteract it by an alliteration upon that sacred and characteristic garment, which even Mr. Weller the elder, in his conversation with the old housekeeper, shrunk with delicate awe from mentioning. But pray, what objection can there be, in the nature of things, to politics in petticoats? Does not John Bull, or his organ the London Spectator, know that in the languages of the two most politic and polished nations that have flourished in the world's history, the very science of politics is of the feminine gender? How does he construe *ἡ Πολιτική* and *la Politique*? And what does he say to himself for submitting to that which good King James used to call "the monstrous regiment of women"? What does he think of Queen Victoria, the source of every political honor he can enjoy? Why, John is under petticoat government himself, but without seeming to know it, though every body is on the broad grin. Let us hear from him, then, no more taunting alliterations, no more unbecoming allusions to one part or another of the feminine dress, remembering that the great Pericles was taught politics and eloquence by the fair lips of Aspasia.

We hope we have disposed of John Bull and the London Spectator. Now let us consider, for a few moments, the extraordinary book which has so stirred up the insular mind. The quality which most strikes us, in the analysis of its contents, is the laudable discrimination displayed in the political portraits. An envious person might possibly insinuate that Mrs. Maury some-

times oversteps the modesty of nature,—that she colors too highly. Suggestions of this sort, however, coming from the source they do, are entitled to no consideration. Mrs. Maury never colors too highly, never is indiscriminate. Her distinctions are great, greater, greatest,—good, better, best; and what better distinctions can any one make than the three degrees of comparison? If she makes no more, it is not her fault, but the fault of English adjectives; for we have not, as the Greeks had, the liberty of constructing double comparatives and superlatives. If we had, we doubt not Mrs. Maury would have applied them, with her usual skill, to at least half a dozen of her heroes. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Charles Jared Ingersoll, would certainly have been placed among the superlatives of the second degree.

A short preliminary dissertation disposes of the President and People of the United States. Then—"begin from Jove the strain"—the portraits of individual deities commence with James Buchanan, the Secretary of State, of whom she says that the moment she saw him, at a ball, she knew that she "had looked upon a friend." Her deep intuition was justified by the event; for, says she, "he granted me every indulgence, and accorded my every wish." Even at the most frightful moments of brave talk respecting a war with England about Oregon, she "sought consolation from Mr. Buchanan." To most people this would seem, under the circumstances, a very odd source to go to for comfort; and nothing short of Mrs. Maury's divining-rod could have pointed her thither. "I ever left his presence," says she, "with a light and happy heart." We learn from her, too, that Mr. Buchanan has "an aristocratic address and manner," and a "full-blooded system," both of which are peculiar qualifications for a Democratic Secretary of State. The sketch is followed by extracts from the Hon. Secretary's speeches. Mr. Haywood of North Carolina, whose "compliments are always gratifying," and who "speaks excellent English," comes next to the Secretary of State. Mr. Abbott Lawrence occupies four pages. His "features are very handsome." The general conclusion,—the result of profound reflection,—that "the American forehead is almost always well formed," introduces a peculiarity of Mr. Lawrence's; namely, that it "clearly denotes the immense superiority of the intellectual over the physical nature." So that point is settled. Mrs. Maury made the curious discovery, among other things, that Mr. Lawrence's "religion" is "Episcopalian"; people have generally supposed it was the Christian religion. Of the Hon. Hugh L. White, we are assured that "in personal appearance, dress, manners, and mode of speaking, he *is truly a gentleman*."

Mr. Benton's recent approximation to a major-generalship (we understand the sword has proved but an air-drawn dagger, after all) has excited the public attention. His Bobadilian tactics have amused the quidnuncs, and, we fear, have not frightened the Mexicans. Mrs. Maury says he "possesses much weight in the Senate," that "he is somewhat inclined to corpulency," and that "he has much senatorial dignity." His "nose is broader, the nostrils more expanded, the lips more full, and the mouth less wide, than is usual in the American contour." Whatever else the Senator can do, then, he cannot suspend an opponent *naso adunco*. In a note upon the description of Mr. Benton, we are favored with a sketch of a typical American, — an American in the abstract. "Their hands and feet are more delicately formed, the shoulders are more falling, the neck has more length and less thickness, the limbs are longer, and the step is more rapid than that of their forefathers." What means Mrs. Maury has of ascertaining how rapidly our forefathers stepped we cannot imagine. Of the Hon. Samuel D. Hubbard, she says, — "Surely no man was ever so maliciously good as this representative of stern old Connecticut; and I can only account for it by supposing that he originally came out of the Mayflower, and landed with the Pilgrim Fathers; — he is their very express image. I envied the Whigs and Puritans such intelligence, judgment, and virtue, and have tried all arts to beguile him from their ranks, but in vain." What an obstinate, hard-headed, pragmatical old fellow he must be. *We*, too, can account for his obdurate resistance to Mrs. Maury's weapons — *Mauri jaculis* — only by the supposition that he came over in the Mayflower, and is one of the slow-paced forefathers of the Plymouth rock.

Mr. Van Buren has until now been greatly misunderstood both by friends and foes. Both have imputed to him a foxiness of character, as well as of whiskers. But it is all a mistake, for "he speaks of himself with that unreserved confidence which is so attractive in a distinguished man." At the same time, however, he has the knack of conjuring "men's hearts out of their bosoms." In obedience to "her husband's positive command," — an apparent recognition of the much-contested doctrine, that the husband *has* a right to command, — Mrs. Maury, with her son "the Doctor," called upon the Ex-President, though without a letter of introduction. "The Ex-President's manners are bewitching, he took me by the hand, laughed heartily at my mode of self-introduction, himself lifted from the carriage my travelling bandbox, first ordered the driver home, and then said, — 'The name you bear, Madam, is of itself a sufficient introduction; of course you will stay here, for it will give us the greatest pleas-

ure.' ” So “we sat down in a cool and pleasant parlour ; iced water, lemonade, and wine were immediately presented.”

We cannot resist quoting another beautiful passage, which would make a good subject for a picture, to be entitled “The Sage of Lindenwold.” It describes a ramble through the farm and garden. “The Ex-President gathered flowers for me, *led us to look at his potatoes*, presented me with a branch of delicious red currants, and delighted me by calling my boy ‘Doctor,’ and walking along the fields with his arm round the little fellow’s neck.” *Fortunate puer !* to have his neck encircled by such an arm ! And what an interest a great man throws around the most common objects ! The prosaic esculents of a kitchen garden, the useful but unromantic potato, and the red currant, shall henceforth shine transfigured into wreaths of immortal glory upon the Ex-Presidential brow of the Magician of Kinderhook !

We cannot resist the temptation of copying a few sentences from the chapter on Mr. Winthrop. “I have traced, with curious interest, a likeness in Mr. Winthrop to the features of John Winthrop (the first governor), in a portrait painted by Vandyke, and should I revisit America, as I hope, I shall be strangely tempted to ask his permission to try how becomingly he would look in a starched lace ruffle, such as adorns the neck of the Pilgrim governor.” If Mrs. Maury *should* come to Boston, and *should* persuade the dignified representative of the three-hilled city to masquerade it in the ruffles of his ancestor, we say, with the poet of John Gilpin, “May we be there to see ! ”

It is astonishing how many, and how extraordinary, were the attentions lavished upon Mrs. Maury by the most distinguished persons in the country. The Supreme Court of the United States, as was quite proper, took the lead in these urbanities.

“Before I had ever been presented to Judge M’Lean,” she relates, “I was honored by his protection, and gratified by his notice. My little son was, on general occasions, my only escort ; he attended me to my seat, and then took leave, generally returning every hour to inquire if I was ready to retire. I was thus alone in the court, and might probably have felt somewhat embarrassed (?), being unknown, and in the midst of strangers ; but Judge M’Lean, entering at once into the delicacy of my position, always bowed to me from the bench, as well on my departure as on my entrance. The compliment was the more gratifying, because M’Lean was usually at that time the presiding judge on the bench. Immediately, by this recognition, I felt myself in the society and under the protection of the graceful and benignant judge, and no words can express the relief afforded me by this most delicate and refined attention ; the impulse of a heart filled with that charity which surpasses comprehension.”

“Mr. Webster,” also, “unless when greatly occupied by business,

always acknowledged me in court, and seemed amused with my frequent attendance there; he once complimented me on my good taste and devotion to the law."

From Mr. Webster we pass on to Mr. Hannegan, whose recent passage at arms with General Benton has thrown the country into convulsions of laughter. On one occasion, in the gallery of the Senate, Mrs. Maury grew very enthusiastic. "In the excitement of the moment, I threw down my glove to the speaker; it fell at his side. The chivalrous Hannegan instantly picked it up, pressed it to his lips, looked gratefully up to the gallery, bowed, and placed it in his bosom. The fortunate glove was transmitted by the next day's post to the lady of the Senator, then in Indiana. I preserve the less happy fellow to it."

There are other things equally spicy about Mr. Hannegan. But *paullo majora canamus*. At a ball given by Mr. John Quincy Adams,—sublime moment in the history of political philosophy, scarcely less memorable than Gibbon's barefooted friars and the first conception of the Decline and Fall,—the stupendous idea entered Mrs. Maury's mind of writing the present work. Mrs. Gouverneur playfully charged her with an intention of going home and making a book abusive of the Americans. "Never," said Buchanan, on whose arm I leaned, "never; I answer for her. If she puts pen to paper, it will be to do us justice." Mr. Buchanan's sagacity on this occasion shows how well qualified he is to hold in his hand the threads of our foreign diplomacy. The rest of this historical scene must be quoted.

"'And to show,' I quickly added, 'that an Englishwoman has the sense to appreciate your virtues, to admire your greatness, and to return with gratitude your affection, permit me to offer to *you*, Mr. Buchanan, the dedication of such a book.'

"'Beautifully said,' returned the Secretary, 'and I accept it with the greatest pleasure as a proof of your regard; but what will become of your dear friends, Calhoun and Ingersoll?'

"'Mr. Buchanan,' I replied, 'the Secretary of State is the representative of the Americans in foreign nations, and, therefore, my Guardian and my Friend will both approve of my choice.'"

Thus Mr. Buchanan, though a bachelor, may claim the honors of paternity to the present work.

We cannot close our rambling notices of this charming volume without alluding to two more of Mrs. Maury's most distinguished heroes, Mr. Charles Jared Ingersoll, "her guardian," and Mr. Calhoun, "her friend," as she designates them in her little speech to Mr. Buchanan. "Remember, Short's the friend." "To me," says Mrs. Maury, speaking of Mr. Ingersoll, "he accorded his constant, unreserved, and most intimate confidence;

and I declare, and solemnly as I hope for mercy, that the breast of Ingersoll is guiltless of all wilful malice, and free from all vindictive passions. . . . So gentle, so easily affected is he, that I have sometimes invented a pathetic story, that I might see my Guardian weep." Was there ever so touching and tender a scene as this? Mrs. Maury improvising pathos, and the guileless chairman of the committee of foreign affairs, already turned of sixty-three, weeping. It must be a great comfort to Mr. Ingersoll to have found such a compurgator, for a few unconscious peccadilloes have excited a slight degree of prejudice against him; and his recent report upon the Mexican war, which falsifies every fact in the history of the transaction, and commends a line of national policy that would disgrace a den of robbers, tends to keep up in some ill-regulated minds the same unfortunate prejudices. Even the Senate of the United States did him the great wrong to reject his nomination as minister to France, acting under a similar misapprehension. Now, if the following statements of Mrs. Maury had been pondered as they should have been, the "amiable, sensible, brilliant, and witty Ingersoll, charming at sixty-three," could not surely have suffered the ignominy of a rejection. "He has no secrets, and can keep none [not even those of the State Department]; the only error of his nature being an uncontrollable impulse to utter at once, regardless of time and place, the thing he feels, or knows, or even suspects." It was this unfortunate propensity — one that "displays the most noble and most generous sentiments that can animate the breast of man" — that led Mr. Ingersoll into that fatal collision with Mr. Webster. He certainly did show himself to be, as Mrs. Maury says he is, "open to conviction," but we never heard of his having displayed any earnestness in this particular instance "to ask forgiveness," although his character exhibits "all the warm, uncalculating sensibilities of youth."

Apropos to Mr. Ingersoll, we have a disquisition on wit, which Mrs. Maury thinks the Americans have as yet had no time to acquire, not having "had leisure," like Falstaff, to be either witty themselves, or to be the cause of the wit that is in other men. For this opinion she advances several profound reasons. Mr. Ingersoll, the boy of sixty-three, is the only witty person she conversed with in America. His sparkling sallies are recorded, for the admiration of the European world. One of them is as follows: — "At a ball, after keeping him at least an hour, during which time nobody asked me to dance, I observed, 'that for his sake I was sorry that I had had no offers.' 'Madam,' rejoined the only witty man in America, 'I should instantly have repudiated them.'" Now, when we consider that Mr. Ingersoll is not

only the chairman of the committee of foreign affairs, but solitary and alone the incorporation of American wit, this brilliant rejoinder assumes at once a national importance. It may be, after all, that the Senate rejected him as minister to France because they thought the country could not spare the only wit it had.

We tear ourselves reluctantly away from the fascinating repartees of Mr. Charles Jared Ingersoll. We must even pass over Major-General Gaines, and skip to Mr. Calhoun, reversing the old saw, and reading it, *Inter leges silent arma*. Great as have been all who have gone before him in these pages, stupendous as have been the geniuses hitherto commemorated, we have come now to the greatest man but one in the whole illustrious catalogue. "Calhoun is my statesman," quoth the Spectator's impeticoated Politics. "Through good report and through evil report, in all his doctrines, whether upon slavery, free trade, nullification, treasury and currency systems, active annexation, or *masterly inactivity*, I hold myself his avowed and admiring disciple." It must be an inexpressible relief to Mr. Calhoun to have found at last a congenial spirit to sympathize in all his views, and understand them. His principles "are THE DECALOGUE OF REPUBLICS"; — the capitals are Mrs. Maury's. "If you should ask me," said the Carolina statesman to his enthusiastic admirer, "the word that I would wish engraven on my tombstone, it is NULLIFICATION." We confess, it seems to us such an epitaph would sound rather ambiguous. Nullification is the last word that we should like on a tombstone; it sounds too much like *annihilation*, for us; but that may be a Northern prejudice.

Mrs. Maury is a thorough defender of slavery, though an excellent democrat and firm supporter of liberty and equality. She points out in a luminous manner the advantages which the slaveholders enjoy for training themselves in the arts of government, and she denounces those who "preach emancipation" as fanatics. "An hereditary slave-owner, he [Mr. Calhoun] was born and educated a ruler. His gracious, princely nature, accustomed to give command without appeal, is equally accustomed to receive submission without reserve." — "And to this education in the art of government as slaveholders at home, and from their birth, it is mainly owing that the statesmen of the Southern sections display such rare, such excelling wisdom in the discharge of the offices of the Republic." Born rulers are a great and brilliant discovery for a republic. The art of governing is a crucial experiment, which must be tried upon the African race, — *experimentum crucis in corpore vili*, — before it can be applied to our Anglo-Saxon democracy. A great statesman must keep a little model administration at home, which he can mould



at will, — a machine constructed of black men, women, and children, over whom he exercises command without appeal, — in order to qualify himself to administer the government of a free people. The magnetic telegraph, gun-cotton, and Le Verrier's new planet are nothing to this magnificent result of political invention. Mr. Calhoun's eyes, says Mrs. Maury, *give out light in the dark*. These speculations prove the feline attribute; there is a place, however (but that is *not* in our model republic), where "Darkness visible serves only to discover sights of woe."

We *must* cite one affecting passage more.

"From a singular coincidence of circumstances, I had the happy fortune to convey to Mr. Calhoun the testimonies offered to his worth by many leading men.

"The President declares that you possess his perfect confidence and his highest personal esteem. Buchanan pronounces you preëminent in talent and virtue. Mr. Crittenden, Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Hannegan, have all expressed, for themselves and their respective parties, the highest encomiums that men can utter of each other."

To this singularly delicate communication, "Calhoun spoke not; but his eye glistened, and in silence he took my hand and pressed it. *How few have been indulged with such a privilege!*"

We have been obliged to omit many of the plums in the pudding, — to pass without notice many of the stars in Mrs. Maury's milky way of American greatness. An uncommon operation she performed upon the chairman of one of the committees, — that of making him *look nine ways at once*, — a compound strabismus of singular pathological interest we can barely allude to. We take leave of the book by congratulating the country and ourselves, the present generation and the future, that such a chronicler of our illustrious names has arisen; and most especially do we congratulate the illustrious names themselves, that their fame is placed beyond the reach of the accidents of mortality. That old poet was a fool who said, —

Πιθανὸς ἄγαν ὁ θῆλυς ὄρος ἐπινέμεται  
Ταχύπορος· ἀλλὰ ταχύμορον  
Γυναικοκῆρυκτον ὄλλυται κλέος.

"The female mind too quickly moves,  
Too apt to credit what it loves:  
But short-lived is the fame  
Which female heraldries proclaim."